

Recommended Findings - Special Development Permit

The proposed use attains the objectives and purposes of the General Plan of the City of Sunnyvale.

DSP B: *To establish the downtown as the cultural, retail, financial, and entertainment center of the community, complemented by employment, housing and transit opportunities.*

The proposal provides additional retail, housing, entertainment, and office uses to complement other uses existing and planned in the downtown area.

DSP B3: *Improve the Town Center area by reinforcing connections into and through the mall and improve the quality of the tenant mix and mall's physical environment.*

The reconnected street grid and demolition of the core of the mall will provide extensive connections and provide opportunity to attract new quality tenants in support of the remaining department stores and small businesses in downtown.

C1.2.1 (LUTE): *Promote downtown as a unique place that is interesting and accessible to the whole City and the region.*

The uses adopted include regional retail, amusement, physical, cultural and recreational enterprises. The proposal includes these uses and as conditioned will have a cohesive physical form that will assist in identifying Sunnyvale's downtown.

2. The proposed use ensures that the general appearance of proposed structures, or the uses to be made of the property to which the application refers, will not impair either the orderly development of, or the existing uses being made of, adjacent properties through its mix of permitted uses, provisions for additional permits for sensitive uses, architectural design, supply of parking, and investments in street frontage improvements and traffic signals. The proposal as conditioned, minimizes development impact on the surrounding properties and allows development complementary to Sunnyvale downtown goals and image. The redevelopment of the decayed commercial center will in fact be a positive benefit to surrounding uses and improve the general appearance and form of Block 18.

Design Guidelines of the Downtown Specific Plan

The Downtown Specific Plan contains very specific Design Guidelines in both textual and diagrammatic form. The level of detail is precise for many guidelines (e.g. colors, exterior glazing, landscape, materials and art features) and is most appropriately utilized for review of final building details. However, the pertinent project level and general building guidelines are discussed below in relation to the nature of the proposed Special Development Permit, and conditions of approval for final design requirements reference conformance and compatibility with the guidelines.

Site Design and Organization

A1 Maintain the existing downtown street grid and, to the extent feasible, reconstruct the grid where interrupted by Town Center Mall.	The street grid is reconnected to extent feasible as proposed. Extension of Frances street is not feasible due to the existing occupied department stores.
A2 Locate private on-site parking below grade or behind active uses.	The applicant has provide 30% of parking below grade and on-grade structures are wrapped with active commercial or residential uses. Architectural treatments are provided along other facades. Deck C is not able to incorporate active uses along Sunnyvale Ave. due to site constraints. On-street parking is appropriate for the pedestrian friendly and lively streetscape intentions of the DSP.
A5 Locate retail entrances, displays and special design features at building corners. Locate less active uses, such as lobby entrances to upper levels, at mid-block.	Corners of McKinley at Mathilda and Taaffe provide interesting corner elements for retail. Corners of Washington at Mathilda and Murphy are also vital points that provide architectural interest. Residential lobbies and office spaces are located mid-block.
A6 Provide direct entrances or stoops to street level residential units....	All proposed on grade town homes have walk up front doors.

Architecture and Design

B1 Use variable heights and roof forms to break up heights. Do not present a uniform block of buildings at the maximum permitted height.	Throughout the project different areas of the development incorporate varying heights and architectural styles. The highest elevations (4 to 5 stories) are along Mathilda and west section of McKinley with lower levels (2 to 3 stories) in the core and east half of the development. Individual building designs incorporate various roof treatments. The Mathilda frontage has three buildings proposed with three separate roof styles varying height by up to 10 feet. Mixed-Use residential buildings incorporate three separate styles with varying building heights that step down and up along with differing roof forms on the same facades. Distinct roof forms are provided for town homes. The Mathilda office buildings do not have the appearance of being broken up and are to be revised as a condition of approval. The cinema use requires uniform height and reaches its maximum allowable height limiting additional height variation.
B2 Interrupt ground floor facades about every 30 feet with various architectural elements.	Along Murphy Avenue this is critical and provided with the individualistic character of architecture. Additional refinement to the gaps in the facades is required. Redwood Square is strongly influenced by landscaping with less influence on architecture elements, standard window displays and entries address the intent. Along McKinley and Washington interruptions are proportional to the building mass and height, generally the base building materials and treatments will extend beyond 2 storefronts and be wider than 30 feet. The various materials and features do meet the intent of the guideline while providing for visual continuity and appropriate proportions for the larger buildings. Individual tenant improvements within the base framework will provide interruptions. Mathilda elevations require additional detailing and features to meet this guideline. Town home units are less than 30 feet wide and architecturally satisfy this guideline. Parking structures along Taaffe and Sunnyvale Ave. require additional information.
B3 New commercial development should have a variety of styles and appear to be constructed over a long period of time. "Cookie Cutter" development is discouraged.	The project is planned around the DSP Commercial Core district design concepts. The project has 7 separate areas of Mathilda, West McKinley, Redwood Square, Murphy, Washington, Iowa, and Taaffe for uses and styles. Increased distinction of individual areas or excessive forced individual design within the district may create a false and "cookie cutter" project feel.

B5 Buildings within Sunnyvale's downtown may be contemporary in their form if architecture detailing is compatible with the surrounding architectural styles.	Contemporary or modern architecture is not a feature of the project per se. The Mozart office buildings do provide influence to the design of the office and mixed-use buildings near the corner of Mathilda and Washington.
<i>Setbacks</i>	
B7 Try to maintain a well-defined street edge...	All commercial buildings frame the public realm of the streets by being located at the property line.
B8 Place building frontages parallel to the street, recognize street corners with tower elements or recessed or chamfered (<i>clipped</i>) entry elements.	All buildings align parallel to the street. Most corners are chamfered for retail or tower elements are proposed to distinguish important locations.
B9 Define Buildings with top middle and base. Each component shall have horizontal and vertical articulation.	Different scales of buildings require different treatments. One and two-story buildings will incorporate more fine level detailed features oriented to the pedestrian to define the base, middle, top. Larger buildings require both fine details at pedestrian level as well as significant material and form changes to define the buildings. The fact that retail is the base use in most buildings distinguishes the base of the buildings, the middle is a secondary use with its own style with windows, balconies, colors, materials, etc., and the top incorporates various roof forms that define edge of the building. The tallest building is the cinema which incorporates an attractive fresco with interspersed columns to define the top of the building horizontally rather than a pronounced roof. In general stronger cornices, surrounds, and other features are needed to define building segments. Murphy extension specifically requires tile work details at the base and other character elements similar to Historic Murphy Avenue.
B13 For upper floors, articulation is the most important quality. Continuous flat facades should be avoided through recessed windows, awnings, French balconies, bay windows, and vertical elements.	Mixed-use residential buildings articulate the upper floors with varying building planes and buildings heights for each style. A variety of windows and balconies add depth and texture to the design. Mathilda office buildings are designed at an appropriate scale for orientation towards the larger boulevard of Mathilda Avenue. The articulation is achieved through window patterns, vertical columns, and defined entry lobbies. Additional information on articulation features for the office buildings is required for compliance with this guideline.
B17 Provide window displays and views into active retail, entertainment, and commercial uses.	All primary street frontages contain ground floor retail. Retail incorporates display windows.
B19 Avoid blank facades.	Of the plans submitted all elevations contain elements of interest in terms of the type of use or architectural details. Additional secondary elevations have not been submitted for review to determine compliance with this guideline.
<i>Roofs</i>	
B21 Roof treatments, such as cornices and overhangs, are encouraged to clearly delineate and terminate individual building tops. Unarticulated parapets are not allowed.	A variety of overhangs are incorporated into the multi-story mixed-use buildings, other buildings have proposed cornice elements. Office building parapet variation requires additional attention from the applicant. Strengthening of the cornices is a condition of approval. The longest parapet is the cinema and includes a cornice element above the fresco and tower extensions. Parapet articulation beyond cornices and extensions are not needed details along McKinley, however side and rear elevations may needed vertical articulation or cornices for computability with this guideline.
B22 Roof overhangs are encouraged to feature rafter and outrigger treatments.	Select residential roof overhangs provide exposed rafters.
<i>Windows</i>	
B25 Window and mullions are encouraged to form composed patterns	Office buildings appropriately provide standardized window treatments that complement the building form. Residential

of fenestration to complement a building's massing and to provide scale and rhythm.	facades proposed a more varied window style that provides more individual character. The general desire for the development is for individual character applied to most facades and those facades are not intended to replicate composed patterns that provide uniform and horizontal treatments.
<i>Site Landscaping</i>	
C1 Demonstrate a landscape design concept and link various site components.	The street trees are the primary link to the downtown as a whole and within the project. The streetscape as a whole is the most critical link to the site. The hardscape features of enhanced pavement link pedestrian connections throughout the development. Individual potted plants will provide district character when planted materials are not appropriate.
C2 Preserve and incorporate existing natural features, particularly trees, into the landscape design of projects.	Most on-site landscaping is along the periphery of the existing Town Center Mall. Heritage resource redwood trees internal to the existing mall are to be retained and become the defining feature for the central plaza area. Most other existing trees are to be removed and replaced with new landscaping.
<i>Open Space</i>	
C10 Provide private outdoor space for each residential unit as an outward projecting balcony or an inward projecting terrace when possible.	All street facing facades incorporate a variety of balcony treatments, most if not all units are provided with individual space within the integrity of the architectural design. Internal units facing the courtyard may include fewer balconies in consideration of privacy. Terraces are provided along Washington.
C13Plazas shall be developed with special paving, landscaping, fountains, seating areas, quality lighting, and other pedestrian amenities.	The main public open space is Redwood Square which incorporates the existing redwoods, outdoor seating, landscaping, a café, out door seating, and an upper level open-air balcony overlooking the plaza.
<i>Parking Structures</i>	
E1 Horizontal parking decks shall occur at perimeter bays, visually shielding sloping ramps at interior bays, giving structures a simple expression of vertical columns and horizontal beams and spandrels	All parking decks are horizontal providing simple geometric expression.
E2 Facades shall be given the same thoughtful consideration as active buildings.	Most facades are wrapped with active uses. Segments of Taaffe, Murphy, and Sunnyvale Avenue have viewable segments. The Sunnyvale elevation is the largest exposed segment and as proposed uses simple tower enhancements and horizontal lines. More thoughtful features are needed to address the "hard" edge created by the vertical nature and large mass of the structure located at the property line. Taaffe elevations are to include pedestrian oriented elements of interest and concealment of the vehicles. Murphy Avenue presents a challenge of addressing the facades in the context of compatibility with Historical Murphy Avenue architectural style. Proposed gaps in treatments are not acceptable.
<i>Service Facilities and Mechanical Equipment</i>	
F1 Locate service areas and drives away from public streets and nearby residential uses. Place service facilities in least visible areas.	The buildings are at the property line, therefore service areas cannot be set away from the streets. Service areas are internal to the project and not near existing residential uses. Service areas are integrated into the buildings facades rather than as separate "enclosures" as utilized throughout Sunnyvale. The most significant detail is the treatment of the gates and doors to these facades. The gaps and treatments along Murphy are inadequate for creating the sense of street continuity that is needed. Further refinement is needed.
F3 Integrate screening for rooftop mechanical equipment into the building massing...	Roof plans have not been submitted with the building elevations for evaluation.